

Up the Trail without a Lasso

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A social studies mapping lesson on the cattle trails, railroads, and grazing lands of the early cattle industry.

Montana Social Studies Content Standard 3: Benchmarks 1,2,3,4,5 are addressed in this lesson.

Grade Level: 4

Subject: Social Studies

Prerequisites: Students will need to have background knowledge on the geography of the United States and the patterns of settlement of the country. Students will also need to have an understanding of cattle, breeds of cattle, and the development of the beef industry.

Duration: 45 minutes to 1 hour

Description: The purpose of this lesson is to make students more aware of the main cattle route for trading and shipping throughout the mid-western United States.

Goals: Using map skills, students will develop an understanding of the importance of cattle trails, railroad and range land and how they impacted the cattle industry.

Objectives:

1. Students will identify and label the four main cattle trails on a map of the U.S.
2. Students will identify and label railroad lines for shipping on a map of the U.S.
3. Students will identify and label the major cities and towns along the trails and railroad lines.
4. Students will identify and label the major grazing utilized by Kohrs and other ranchers of the Open Grazing Era.
5. Students will understand the relationship between cattle trails and railroads as they related to the cattle industry.

Materials:

1. Wall Map of the United States
2. Student maps of the United States
3. Rick rack, yarn, string, craft sticks, toothpicks, etc...
4. Colored pencils, crayons, markers, etc...
5. Picture of Hereford and Longhorn cattle

Teacher Resources:

1. Cowboys of the Wild West by Russel Freedman (ISBN 0-395-54800-4), Map on page 15
2. Traveling Trunk from: Grant-Kohrs Historical Ranch (406-846-2070), 266 Warren Lane, Deer Lodge MT 59722

Vocabulary:

1. Trail- an established path along which to travel.
2. Cattle Drive- the movement of a herd of cattle from ranchers and grazing lands to the railroad lines for shipment to meat packing plants farther east.
3. Grazing- 1) to feed on growing grass and pasturage, as do cattle and sheep 2) pastureland, a pasture
4. Shipping- the sending or carrying of goods from place to place.

5. Range- open areas over which cattle roam and feed
6. Roundup- the process of collecting cattle by riding around them and driving them in

Procedure:

1. Review the geography of the United States in terms of the western movement from what is present day Texas to Montana.
2. Pre-teach the vocabulary words pertinent to the lesson.
3. Review the breeds of cattle directly involved in the early trail drives and beef industry.
4. Using the wall map of the United States, the teacher will lead a whole group discussion and label the map with the four major cattle drive trails, railroads, cities and towns along the trails as well as identifying the grazing areas in the Northwest.
5. Next, students will use the classroom map and the knowledge gained from the discussion to label their own map with the various craft supplies. Students are to make a key to define how their map was labeled.

Assessment:

At the end of the lesson, each student will have labeled map depicting the four major cattle drive trails, railroads, cities and towns along the trails and the major grazing areas in the northwest with 100% accuracy.

Expansion and Enrichment:

1. Students can make cookies in the shape of the United States or Montana (cookie cutters are available in museums and gift shops) and label the map as directed above with different colors of frosting.
2. Learn a western song such as Git along Little Doggies, My home's in Montana, I Ride an Old Paint.
3. Visit the Chuck Wagon site from Grant-Kohrs Ranch (by Theresa Smith, Mary Rose Lombardi, and Lewis Cozby.)
4. Use the "Trail Drive Simulation" game from Grant-Kohrs Historical Ranch, PO Box 790, Deer Lodge MT 59722.

Student Books:

Freedman, Russell. (1985) *Cowboys of the Wild West*. Clarion Books. New York, NY.
Kalman, Bobbie. (1999) *Life on the Trail*. Crabtree Publishing Company. New York, NY.
Moon, Dolly M. (1982) *My First Book of Cowboy Songs*. Dover Publications, Inc. New York, NY.

Teacher References:

Abbot, E.C. and Huntington Smith, Helena. (1955) *We Pointed Them North: Recollections of a Cowpuncher*. University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, OK.
Grant-Kohrs Traveling Trunk Teachers Resource Book

Maps:

Map of the Month - Map of the United States
Eastside Station
PO Box 2484
Providence, RI 02906-0484
Cowboys of the Wild West - Trail map
Grazing areas: Grant-Kohrs Archives